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TABOO AMONG THE ANCIENT HEBREWS

ARTHUR CHARLES JAMES

A THESIS

IN HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA
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A STUDY OF CERTAIN PHASES OF EARLY HEBREW LEGISLATION

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TO MY WIFE

Whose constant interest in my
effort has always urged me on

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For their kindly interest and many helpful suggestions, I desire to express my sincerest appreciation to Professor George A. Barton, Professor James A. Montgomery and Assistant Professor Frank G. Speck, of the University of Pennsylvania.

INTRODUCTION

After several years of study under the direction of that eminent scholar and gifted teacher, the late Morris Jastrow, Jr., my interest in the field of comparative religions led me to an intensive study of the food taboos and dietary laws among some primitive and advanced religions. The subject gradually developed, with Dr. Jastrow's approval, into the scope of a thesis and I forthwith started upon its arrangement with this end in view. Coincident with its inception came the sudden demise of my teacher, whose guiding hand and kindly interest had led me to address myself to the undertaking. Accordingly from the beginning I lost the advantage of contact with one for whom this subject held a peculiar interest.

After several years of careful documentary study it became apparent that the field of food taboos and dietary laws, common among both primitive and advanced religions, was far too extensive and led to no definite outcome because of the generality of the subject. My studies in the field of anthropology led me to faintly discern what I then believed to be a connection between the early Hebrew proscriptions and the widespread primitive taboos. As the result of frequent discussions with Dr. George A. Barton, the subject crystallized into the present study of taboos among the ancient Hebrews. Thus the scope of my treatise is limited to the Semitic field and, more particularly, to the early Hebrews. With the thought of making it even more intensive, I have confined myself to what may be termed the major taboos such, for example, as the restrictions upon sex, blood, food, sacred persons, firstborn, and the "devoted" thing.

The outcome of my compilation and analysis seems to establish the identity of early Hebrew restrictions with the taboos of what we generally regard as primitive peoples. If we were to seek for fundamental concepts resembling certain Jewish prohibitions, our attention would be directed to Southern Asia and

the islands of the Pacific. For example, in Polynesia the term *"noa"* is the opposite of *"tabu"* and signifies "general." Hence we find the expression *"ai tabu"* (eating sacred) and *"ai noa"* (eating generally) opposed to each other in a very real manner. Indonesia and the regions of the Pacific present areas where the taboo development has probably reached its greatest extent. Inasmuch as those peoples sustain an affinity to the continental groups, one might venture to say that further penetration into the fundamentals of taboo beliefs and practices would produce evidence of convergence in antiquity. My particular interest, however, is within Semitic boundaries. Others, however, more familiar with Asiatic culture have been impressed by the possibility, if not probability, of a primitive convergence. I shall, therefore, confine my present study to the Hebraic culture, leaving the effort to establish contacts between Asiatic areas and archaic Hebrew culture to more capable hands. My investigations have led me to believe that no other investigator has concerned himself with this particular identification of the taboo among the ancient Hebrews. I trust, therefore, that the results of my labors, however meagre, may at least possess the merit of originality.

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CHAPTER I

PARTICULAR PHASES OF TABOO

In approaching our subject it is of first importance that we clearly comprehend the vital distinction which we must draw between the primitive conception of "holiness" and "uncleanness," on the one hand, and the ethical and moral signification which at once suggests itself to the modern mind. Certain persons, animals, trees, stones, streams, are, to the primitive man "holy" because they sustain a near relation to the gods. "Holy" expresses this relationship. Mt. Sinai evidently was a "sacred" mount—the haunt of a god—before Moses led the children of Israel to that spot. These "holy" persons and things are subject to numerous restrictions, "taboos," which remove them from the realm of the "common." It is the "common" things only which are for the untrammeled use of man. "Holiness" is that with which the forbidden or tabooed thing is charged, and which vents itself upon the violator. It is the fear of the supernatural penalty which enforces the taboo. "Holiness" is, in other words, the positive side of the taboo, *i. e.*, the persons and things which are sacred to the gods. But we look in vain for an ethical or moral content. "Uncleanness" we may term the negative side of the taboo—that which is "hateful" to the gods and hence must be avoided. That which is "unclean" is taboo and must not come in contact with "holiness." The "holy" thing is dedicated to God and at the same time removed from common use. The "unclean" thing, for the very opposite reason, *i. e.*, association with malign powers, is likewise removed from common use. There are various purifications—טהר (to make clean) with which we shall have to do later when we consider the removal of the חרם (ban). The condition of קדש (holiness) is just as perilous as that of טמאה (uncleanness) because the "holy" person is peculiarly susceptible to "defilement" which may prove the more fatal to him. All this is the language of the "taboo."

This susceptibility to "defilement" or "holiness" at once manifests affinity with the "taboo" (Isa. 65:5). In Lev. 11 we have unmistakable evidence of this relationship. The reference to the "defilement" sinking into the pores of the vessels so that the impurity cannot be removed, and the vessels, therefore, must be broken, points in but one direction—the "taboo." This idea is most common to the Semitic peoples.[4] We recognize it frequently in the Pentateuch. "Cleanness" and "holiness" gradually approach each other in meaning, though the former is the more comprehensive term. The transmissibility of "holiness" or "uncleanness" is responsible for the numerous restrictions thrown about the "sacred" or "unclean" object. This is the very core of the "taboo." Leviticus is largely taken up with various prescriptions for the removal of the contracted "sanctity" or "uncleanness." If we bear these customs and practices of a primitive nature in mind, we shall the more readily recognize the outline of the "taboo" in Hebrew legislation. The Law of Holiness places the emphasis, we again remark, not upon "moral" defilement, but upon the "physical," which is the primitive concept. It is the persistence of this heathen intermixture with the יהוה cultus, which draws the fierce denunciation of the prophets. The foregoing is the *sine qua non* of our thesis.

The ancient Hebrew concept of "holiness" finds expression in such terms as קדוש (holy), קדש (holiness), קדש (to declare holy or consecrate), קדשים (sacred things), חרם (extreme holiness). The root meaning of קדש is to "separate" or "segregate." The concept of "uncleanness" was expressed linguistically as follows: טמא (to be unclean), טמאה, טמאה (uncleanness), טמא (unclean).

The word חלל suggests pollution or profanation. Cleanness is expressed by טהר (to be clean), טהרה (cleanness) and טהור (clean). The law of holiness (Lev. 17-26) is so-called because of the frequent stress laid upon "holiness." One of the earliest references to "holiness" we find in Ex. 22:31. Permit us to again remark that for the most part it is physical

[4] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 431.

"holiness" or "uncleanness" which we meet in the various codes. It is in the period of the prophets that we find the clear ethical note. The concept of "holiness" and "uncleanness" which confronts us in the early period of Hebrew history is that invariably associated with the primitive taboo. For example, the idea that proximity to the deity or a consecrated thing involves grave peril we find repeatedly in Old Testament writ. Even "to look upon" the hallowed person or thing is dangerous (Ex. 3:6; 1st Kings 19:13; Gen. 16:13, 32:30). To touch a forbidden object may prove fatal, as in the case of Uzzah (2d Sam. 6:6, 7). It is the "thing" rather than the "person" which is the more commonly consecrated. All this is distinctly characteristic of the primitive taboo. We note again the entire absence of the ethical or moral connotation. The "holy" object is primarily the object withdrawn, separated from common use. It is dedicated to the exclusive service of the deity. The term קדוש is applied to the very furnishings of the tabernacle and the temple. The censers are "holy" (Num. 16:37); to touch the altar (Ex. 29:37) or the sacred vessels (Num. 4:15; Ex. 30:29; Hag. 2:12) one would contract "holiness." Contact with the הארון (the ark), as already noted, would be fatal.

"Uncleanness" is a contagion which must be carefully guarded against, just as "holiness" is a sanctity which must be avoided. Very often the line of demarcation between the "holy" and the "unclean" is indistinct both among the primitive and advanced religions. In neither of these conceptions of "holy" and "unclean" do we find a hint of the moral or ethical. That all the Semites have rules of holiness and uncleanness is not without significance, as we shall have occasion to point out later. The outline of the savage taboo begins to become more distinct as we observe another peculiar characteristic of this primitive institution. The "holy" and the "unclean" things are both tabooed things, the one because of its "sanctity," the other because of the danger and peril associated with "uncleanness." The violation of either involves a supernatural penalty. The essence of the tabooed thing is its relation to the gods and not its relation to man.

One of the striking features of the taboo is its contagious, and at times, infectious character. That is to say, it is a physical quality and is transmissible. This fear of contracting "holiness" or "uncleanness" is deeply ingrained in the man of primitive culture, as we shall see, and it persists in the man of the higher culture. It is a ruling factor of the cultus. He who comes in contact with the tabooed object is at once infected and in turn becomes a source of infection. Extreme caution is exercised against becoming infected with either "holiness" or "uncleanness" as either infection must needs be purged, and in some instances, the "infected" person or thing must be utterly destroyed. Furthermore, there are degrees of "holiness" and "uncleanness." Those persons or things, *i. e.*, priest or altar standing in closest relationship to the god or gods, are sacrosanct, as it were, while the carcass of a dead animal, for example, is the *n*th degree of uncleanness. We shall note a similar gradation in "holiness" and "uncleanness" in the various Old Testament codes to which we shall later refer.

In our approach to this particular study of the taboo among the ancient Hebrews, we should appreciate references to a pre-Mosaic period—a period to whose fertile soil the taboo was indigenous. It is quite evident in the early part of the Biblical story that the children of Israel reverenced the Numina ('Elîm), who inhabited the stones, the trees, the springs (Gen. 13:18, 35:4, 21:33; Jud. 9:37; Gen. 14:7, 16:14; 1st Kings 6:1-9). These references to polydemonism, common to Semites, are reflections of a period through which the ancestors of the ancient Hebrews passed. The prophets at a later period were loud in their denunciation of certain practices which doubtless had their roots in that little known but, for our study, most important pre-Mosaic period. It is only as we understand the significance of certain phenomena, having their roots in this prehistoric soil, that we come to an understanding of certain rites and customs in later Israel. In many instances the original motive has been lost, and we have that not infrequent anomaly of the survival and persistence of an institution long after the *raison d'etre* has been forgotten. "No such thing ought to be done in Israel"

(2d Sam. 13:12; also Gen. 20:9, 34:7) certainly harks back to another time, when certain abominations were practiced. When Moses proclaimed *Jahweh* as the God of Israel he did not at once brush all things else aside. Some customs and practices were tolerated and recognized in the new order of things. Indeed it is this very amalgamation of *Jahwism* with the pre-Mosaic religion or religions which makes certain phases of our subject extremely difficult to interpret. In the study of the cult of *Jahweh,* this intermixture with heathen practices constantly challenges us. The various groups of Semitic peoples, who, at one time or another have occupied the Arabian peninsula, have doubtless made their contributions to *Jahwism.* No less an authority than W. Robertson Smith has said that "if we go back to the most ancient religious conceptions and usages of the Hebrews, we shall find them to be the common property of a group of kindred peoples and not the exclusive possession of the tribes of Israel."[5] It would be quite remarkable indeed, if we did not find many institutions "reshaped and remodeled," persisting from the older period, and, in many instances, stripped of their former meaning by the more spiritual prophets. But, on the other hand, we need only to lift the thin veil of later symbolism in order to see and recognize the primitive taboo, which at once makes the institution intelligible. In other words, we must look for what has been called "the natural basis of Israel's worship in the pre-Mosaic period."

In our present study of "taboo" among the ancient Hebrews, we shall limit the scope of our thesis to what may be termed the major taboos. This will enable us to make a more intensive study of the subject. If, for instance, we succeed in establishing the underlying principle or otherwise indicate an essential taboo feature or characteristic in the numerous sex regulations, the restrictions upon the shedding of blood, the dietary laws, and the rules attaching to the sacred persons, we shall have established, in the main, the identification of the numerous minor taboos. Once we find the trail we shall be able to follow it, many times haltingly, in our quest for "taboo" as practiced by the chosen people.

[5] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites,* p. 2.

CHAPTER II

BLOOD TABOO

The very sight of blood inspires dread in the man of primitive culture. From the earliest times we find traces of the widespread belief that the blood is the נפש (the soul, comprehending the sentient principle). This blood "sanctity" is so deeply rooted in the mind of man that blood may be termed the taboo "par excellence." We find the custom in ancient Egypt of wearing the red amulet, symbolical of the blood of Isis, by those in blood union with the deity. The Syrian Arabs take their oath on their blood. The warrior who has slain a foe is "unclean"—the same as the menstruous woman or the lying-in woman—because he has shed blood unceremoniously. The unclean warrior must be secluded in the men's club house until the period of his uncleanness has passed.[17] He may come in contact with nobody, not even his wife or children until he has purified himself of his defilement. The Flamen Dialis was forbidden to touch or even name raw flesh.[18] The Brahmans, at certain periods, are not to look upon raw meat, or blood, or persons with their hands severed.[19] The Romans held the same belief, as did also the Chinese.[20] The same dread of blood is found among the Papuan tribes of New Guinea.[21] A similar reverence is extended by some peoples to the blood of animals. The very ground on which the blood falls is "taboo" among primitive folks. The "blood taboo," as previously pointed out, inspires most of the sexual restrictions. The blood of a woman works disastrous results on the man. In the practice of "magic," blood is the most powerful charm—magic has been well termed the negative side of "taboo." In other words, this primitive fear, as well as the awe of the more civilized man, in the presence of

[17] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. II, p. 165.
[18] Plutarch, *Quaest*, Rom. 110.
[19] Servius on *Virgil*, Aen., Vol. 79.
[20] J. J. M. Degroot, *Religious Sys. of China*, IV 80, 82.
[21] J. G. Frazer, Id.

blood, is due to a dread lest he absorb another life. "The blood is the life."

The references to blood among the ancient Hebrews are numerous and emphatic. David will not drink of the water brought from the well, because it is the price of blood and hence he pours it out as an offering unto the Lord (1st Chr. 11:17). The same king of Israel is not permitted to build the temple because he had "embrewed his hands in the blood of his fellow man" (1st Chr. 22:8). The execution of a murderer (2d Sam. 21:1) was a sacrifice to the violated god. The blood shed by the slayer belonged to the god. The duty of the goel is to restore the "loss of blood." There is nothing ethical or moral here. This is always significant. Originally there was no distinction drawn between murder and manslaughter. The city of refuge provided a sanctum where "die Blutraabe" could not slay the offender. In Gen. 9:4 we have the general command to abstain from eating blood. This command is particularized in a most drastic manner upon numerous occasions among the early Hebrews. In Gen. 9:3-6 we read: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things (flesh). But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof (flesh with the blood in it) shall ye not eat, and surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." We observe that even the blood of clean animals permitted as articles of diet is forbidden food because it is the נפש. Further emphasis is given to the sanctity of blood in Lev. 7:26, 27. "Ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be fowl or beast, in any of your dwellings." And the heavy penalty of death is added to the violation of the blood sanctity (Lev. 17:10-12). In this last reference we come a little closer to the real nature of the taboo. We read: "Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood; I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and I will

cut him off from among his people. For the life, נפש, of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life, therefore I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that is among you eat blood" (Lev. 17:10-12). This is the very essence of "taboo." The blood is "holy." It must not be eaten, nay it must not even be touched nor in some instances, even looked upon. It "defiles" whatever it touches even though it is the essence of "holiness"—life. "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh" (Lev. 17:14). "Whatsoever man . . . that killeth an ox or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it without the camp and hath not brought it unto the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it (with the blood) as an oblation unto the Lord . . . blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood (improperly) . . . shall be cut off from among his people" (Lev. 17:3, 4). This is the severity and swift judgment of the primitive taboo. And in Lev. 17:15, 16, we have the indisputable evidence of the survival of an old custom: "And every soul that eateth that which died of itself (with the blood), or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country (clean), or of a stranger (unclean) he shall both wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and be 'unclean' until the evening. Then he shall be 'clean.' But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity." The blood is sacrosanct. It is instinct with life—it is life. The drinking of blood (forbidden the Hebrews), by certain tribes of savages,[22] was sharing the life of the deity. The blood must be poured upon the ground to hasten its immediate union with the source of life—god. Blood belongs to the קדשי קדשים, most holy things, (Lev. 21:22). We note a magical element with reference to the blood of wild animals slain in the hunt. Such blood must at once be covered with earth, otherwise it would be construed by the demons and "evil spirits" as an offering to them. This would be a gross pollution of the blood "sanctity."

[22] Marino, *Reise*, p. 179.

The extremely hallowed nature of the blood is very apparent in the "blood covenant." This is a very ancient Semitic rite. It is commingling of blood and forms a compact which can never be broken. So "sacred" is the union that if the contracting parties are man and woman, a marriage uniting them would be incest. This suggests the basis we shall endeavor to establish for the taboo in marriage, *i. e.*, the prohibition upon the "maternal" side of the family, because of the recognized blood relationship. It would be incest. The blood covenant is a closer tie than natural descent. The Arabs hold that the brothers of a covenant of blood are closer than brothers at a common breast. We have, in other words, the union of two persons in one nature just as the sacrificial "blood" of the animal brings about union of the deity in one nature. The blood covenant is widely distributed, being found in Egypt, China, Burmah, Madagascar, Borneo, Malay Archipelago, North and South America and the South Sea Islands. It is common to the Semitic, Hamitic and Japhetic divisions of the race. In view of these facts we can appreciate more readily the meaning of אסר אסר על נפש. It was in this sense that the Greeks and Romans poured out the blood of their victim unto their gods.[23] In the covenant at Sinai, Moses took half the blood and put it in a basin; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar . . . . and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people . . . . and Moses said: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you" (Ex. 24:1-11). Abraham devoted his own blood unto יהוה.

It is very evident that, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have been dealing with the "blood taboo." We have already observed that this particular taboo has manifested itself quite often. It is indeed a major taboo, if not "the major" taboo.

[23] Pindar's *Olympian Odes*, Ode I, line 146.

CHAPTER III

SEX TABOOS

(1) *Marriage Degrees*

The historical Hebrews practiced endogamy generally, though we find occasional foreign alliances (2d Sam. 3:3; 1st Kings 16:31; Ruth 1:4; 2d Chr. 24:26). The evidence that we find among the Canaanites, Aramaeans and heathen Hebrews points to polygamy, with its accompaniment, loose sexual relationships. At the dawn of their historical period, the Semites appeared to be polyandrous.[6] The same is true of many other peoples, particularly the Semitic, who later reached a plane of higher culture. The matriarchate, which we shall presently emphasize, is an expression of polyandry. Polyandry, the union of one wife with many husbands, recurred frequently in the Old Testament period. Under this system, the position of the mother, with particular reference to parenthood of children, is all important. The beena marriage (Gen. 2:24, 11:24, 31:43) appears well established. Deut. 17:17 presents the legal regulation of polyandry. It is the typical, though not exclusive, type of marriage in the Old Testament. Experience gradually taught its lesson, as we note in Prov. 2 (the reference to the "abomination" of whoredom). In Malachi we have the final arraignment.

Gradually, and the process was a gradual one, there arose a system of forbidden degrees of kinship. This was inevitable, from our viewpoint and that of the proheths of Israel, but we believe an entirely different reason lies at the bottom of the forbidden degrees of kinship, other than the evils arising from consanguinity as we understand it. The ancient Jew regarded as incestuous certain unions common among the neighboring peoples. For example, union with a daughter or with a uterine sister, was an "abomination," but among relations on the parental side, the utmost freedom was permitted. The distinction repeat-

[6] W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 175.

edly drawn, directly or indirectly, between the "paternal" and the "maternal" holds, we believe, a partial explanation of the "forbidden degrees." Thus Abraham justifies his marriage with his half-sister, the daughter of his "father" (Gen. 20:12); and Tamar's words (2d Sam. 13:13) suggest that such a relationship was lawful even to the monarchic period. Moses, it would appear, was an offspring of a marriage between a nephew and his "paternal" aunt (Num. 26:59). In Lev. 18:7-17 (cf. Lev. 20:11) we have a list of "forbidden degrees." An emphasis, in the "forbidden" degrees, appears to be placed on "paternal" relationship on the one hand and "maternal" relationship on the other, with particular emphasis upon the latter. A brief summary of the forbidden degrees is as follows: "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness" (Lev. 18:6). This "near of kin," frequently recurring throughout the code, is a further key to the understanding of the underlying "taboo." This phrase brings us pretty close to the primitive significance of the prohibitions that follow. For example (Lev. 18:7-17; cf. Lev. 20:11) the commands not to "uncover their nakedness"—a moral content is utterly foreign to the primitive "taboo" and is likewise absent here—of thy father or mother, step-mother (father's wife), step-sister (daughter of father), or daughter of the mother (by former husband), son's daughter or daughter's daughter—"for it is 'thine own' nakedness," thy father's wife's daughter (step-sister), thy father's sister (paternal aunt)—"thy father's kinswoman," thy mother's sister, thy father's brother (paternal uncle), or his wife, thy daughter-in-law, thy son's wife, thy brother's wife, step-daughter or step-daughter's daughter, a living wife's sister. It has been suggested further, that Lev. 18:11 also prohibits union with the daughter of a man's step-mother by a previous husband; and Lev. 18:9 points to a full sister. Various further extensions of these "forbidden degrees" are seen in the bars upon the marriage of an uncle with a niece; and of a nephew with a widow of his maternal uncle. There was a further natal disability—the "bastard" shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord even unto the tenth generation (Deut.

23:2). The bastard is not an illegitimate offspring but one born of an unlawful marriage. Hence he is "unclean." Certain problems involved in the marriage before or after the death of one of the principals are not germane to this discussion.

What is the *raison d'être* of these restrictions? Is this code just a series of restrictions, superimposed upon polygamy and polyandry? We think not. What are some of the answers to our query? One eminent authority[7] has proposed that these "forbidden degrees" are (a) repugnant to natural sentiments of mankind (horror naturalis); (b) lead to physical degeneration of a stock; (c) tend to aggrandizement of particular families; (d) subversion of natural rights. These answers are undoubtedly correct as far as they go. The question is, do they go far enough? We think not. Every system of "forbidden degrees" —and they are numerous—is subjected to more or less modification and change as it passes from the hand of one social stratum to another. Throughout these restrictions we have indicated an emphasis put on the "maternal," and this is to be expected where the family organization centers in the mother. Are we not really face to face with the most fundamental of all primitive taboos, *i. e.*, that of life? It is through the mother, the "maternal" side of the family, that life is transmitted. The mother, at childbirth, as we shall learn later, is highly taboo. The mother transmits this "life" to her son, her daughter, but this life, she, too, mysteriously received from her "mother." Her full sisters are "one" with her. The same blood, the seat of life, flows in their veins. The dread mystery of life is naturally associated with the maternal kin. The "blood" taboo, as such, may be the persisting force at work, enforcing these "forbidden degrees." "Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:11).

The real key to the solution of these "forbidden degrees" of marriage is to be found, we think, in the significant and often repeated phrase, "near of kin." Incest was an "abomination" commonly practiced by Israel's neighbors, particularly Canaan and Egypt. In the latter country, for example, marriage between parents and children was sanctioned. In the list of unlawful

[7] J. D. Michaelis, *Mos. Recht* (Eng. Tr.), II, p. 53.

marriages (Lev. 18:7-17) there are eleven cases of affinity and six of consanguinity enumerated. The violation of any one of these proscribed degrees is punishable by death. "Intense loathing and abhorrence" doubtless played a part in these restrictions, but rather, we venture to say, as an effect than as a cause of them. What we really have here is another phase of the blood taboo. Kinship signifies those of "one blood." This applies equally to affinity as to consanguinity. The blood is "holy" in a supreme sense. It must not be violated in any way. Incest was regarded as an "abomination"—uncleanness—because it was an infraction of the taboo on blood. Extreme sanctity was ascribed to the blood. Death was the penalty inflicted upon the one who disregarded the restriction. Magic again plays an important role.

That at the bottom of these restrictions there is a taboo or taboos is very evident from the nature of the penalties inflicted for the infraction of a prohibition. In Deut. 22:23, 24; 27:20, those guilty of these particular types of incest are under the curse. (The herem will occupy us later.) In other words, the violation of a taboo results in the tabooing of the offender. In Lev. 20, incestuous intercourse, viz., with a step-mother (v. 11), a daughter-in-law (v. 12), or with a woman whose daughter has already been taken by the man as his wife (v. 14), is punishable by death. Such a penalty is very frequent for the violation of a taboo.[8] When the breach of a taboo such as the ones just referred to, is punished by stoning to death, the body must be burned. This is highly significant. The person has been "unclean," *i. e.*, "taboo." "Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 20:7). The prohibitory degrees, in other words, preserve the "sanctity" (in a primitive sense) of the marriage state, while the abrogation of the restrictions, results in "uncleanness" (Lev. 20:21). This is certainly the language of taboo.

(2) *Menstruation*

With references to the woman in her courses we learn that the Romans held "*nihil facile reperiatur mulierum profluuio*

[8] J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul.*

magis mirificum."[9] In the Koran (11.222) the woman in her period was excluded from her house. The Arabs generally regarded the woman at the time of her menses in much the same light. Girls at their first period, particularly, are regarded by the savage with great dread. We find much the same fear of the menstruating women among the ancient Hebrews. The woman's physical condition is such that she is believed to be surcharged with supernatural power. Magic plays an important role in what may be termed the "negative taboo." Menstruous blood among all primitive peoples constitutes a most powerful charm in magic.[10] It was an old custom among the Arabs to fasten unclean things such as bones of dead men and menstruous rags to children to keep evil spirits away. What we have before us is a typical "blood taboo." Blood is perhaps the most highly tabooed thing to the primitive man. It is dangerous to even touch it or to behold it.[11] The woman at such a time is unclean for a period of seven days, after the discharge ceased (Lev. 15:25-30). In early Israel menstruation is a serious form of "uncleanness." The woman is unclean for a twofold reason—the generative processes and the appearance of blood (Gen. 31: 35; 2d Sam. 11:4). The menstruating woman's uncleanness is communicated to everything that she touches. So infectious is her defilement that any one touching any object that she has touched is unclean till evening (Lev. 15:19). The conjugal relation at such a period meant death to both. The monthly period of the woman is frought with such danger—a dangerous influence emanating from her—that she is isolated. The Australian women at their monthly period will not touch anything used by the men, nor will they walk in places where the men are accustomed to walk, lest their "uncleanness" be transmitted. This is also true of the women of Uganda, many North American tribes and among the Esquimaux. "Taboo"—the "blood taboo" and the taboo of "reproductive function"—is the only word which describes these practices among the primitive

[9] Pliny, H. N., VII, 64.

[10] Cazwini, 1, 365.

[11] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, I., 325, 326. Spencer and Gillen, *Tribes of Cent. Aus.*, p. 460, I.

peoples; it is the only designation for like practices among the ancient Hebrews. The husband who has slept with his wife during this critical period, contracts her "defilement" and is likewise unclean for seven days (Lev. 15:19-24; Gen. 31:35; Is. 30:22; Lev. 18:19, 20:18). Penalty of death, according to Ezk. 18:6, 22:9-11, was inflicted upon the man for a breach of purity at this period. In the Mishna the *niddah* (menstruous woman) is further restricted by rabbinical tradition. The woman must reckon seven days after the termination of her period. If the issue continues seven days, then her impurity continues for a like period and she is not "clean" until the fifteenth day, on which day she must take the *mikweh* (ritual bath). If a woman menstruates irregularly, then she is "unclean" for certain prescribed times before she became aware of it and everything touched by her during that unsuspected period is "unclean." The uncleanness attaching to the menstruous woman forbids her entrance into the sanctuary or the assemblies of the community. The woman in her courses in other words, is a "tabooed person." She is at that time possessed of supernatural power and inspires an awful dread in those about her, so that for the common safety she is isolated, so that the community be not infected. This is an example of the taboo in almost its primitive simplicity. It has a magical association, but so have most taboos when viewed negatively.

It is in order at this juncture to consider briefly "childbirth." The birth of a child rendered the mother "unclean." This, according to J. G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*, III, 463) is almost a universal custom. Moreover, the mother and child are especially "tabooed" for a period immediately following childbirth.[12] A very ancient custom among the Arabs provides a hut beyond the camp where the woman must stay until and subsequent to her delivery. The new-born child is most generally "tabooed" in primitive society, yet Ezk. 16:4 seems to be the solitary reference to its survival among the Hebrews. But the mother is distinctly "tabooed." In Lev. 12, the mother, having given birth to a son, as in menstruation, is "unclean" for seven days and

[12] Jevons, *Introduction to History of Religion*, 74, 75.

must continue in the blood of her purifying thirty-three days. During the first seven days her defilement is infectious, but in a decreasing degree during the remainder of the forty days. When the mother has given birth to a girl, then the two periods are doubled, fourteen and sixty-six days, respectively. This difference of treatment is evidently due to a feeling that the intensity of the supernatural powers possessing the mother are longer sustained in the case of the female than the male, because the lochia is supposed to continue longer after the birth. Childbed, like the monthly period, because of the dangerous influence, is peculiarly dreaded. It is the very culmination of the mystery of life and the man of advanced culture, as his more primitive brother, is filled with awe, if not a sense of fear. The accompanying secretion at childbirth is extremley dangerous, while that of the miscarriage fills the primitive man with dismay. Even the attendants at childbirth the מילדת (Gen. 35:17; Ex. 1:15) became unclean. We observe somewhat the same treatment of the woman in childbed among the Greeks, the Romans and the Zarathustrians. That we are dealing with a primitive taboo, "thinly disguised," is quite evident. The Hebrew legislative restrictions are but the survivals of the "taboo" prohibitions.

(3) *Spermatozoa*

In 1st Sam. 20:26, we read the expression לא טהור (not clean) with reference to one whose nocturnal emission has rendered him "unfit" and hence prohibits his partaking of the sacrificial meal. War, מלחמת יהוה (Wars of Jehovah), according to the Semitic viewpoint, is sacred, because its warriors comprise a "sacred fellowship." The consecration of the warrior for battle consists mainly in his continence (1st Sam. 13:12, 21:5; 2d Sam. 11:11; Ex. 19:15; Deut. 20:5-7, 23: 10-14). The priest hands the shew bread over to David only upon the assurance that he and his warriors have kept themselves from women. On military expeditions, sexual intercourse was strictly taboo because warriors were "hallowed" and the war was "hallowed." David says (1st Sam. 21:5): "Women

have been kept from us about three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy. . . ." Complete continence is sometimes enjoined as, for instance, when Jahweh appears on Sinai (Ex. 19:15). Among primitive peoples, not only the warriors, but those left at home must practice sexual abstinence. Here again we observe the magical elements so common to taboos. We have a reference (2d Sam. 11:8-13) to the refusal of Uriah to see his wife during a military campaign. Puberty, with its concomitant association with the spermatozoa, is hemmed in by the strictest taboos, among primitive peoples. Initiatory rites are of an elaborate character of which circumcision is a part. Great significance is attached to the period of seminal emission. The secretion renders the man unclean. Every garment or part of the skin touched is defiled. The defilement continues until evening. A nocturnal accident to a warrior (Deut. 23:10-11) while engaged in a military expedition immediately renders him unclean and he is expelled from the "holy" camp until the next day when he must bathe and may return to camp at sundown. The seminal discharge, whether in copulation or accidental, renders the man unclean (Lev. 15: 16-18; Deut. 23:10; 1st Sam. 20:26, 21:2). Every man, unclean after this manner, defiles everything he touches and whoever touches the object, thus defiled, is in turn rendered unclean. He is unclean for seven days (Lev. 15:4-12). Clothing proper to one sex is not to be worn by the other sex (Deut. 22:5). This is doubtless a precaution against contact with the discharge. Arabs are forbidden the sexual indulgence while on pilgrimage to Mecca. Herodotus (1.198) tells us that the Babylonians immediately indulge in ablution after the conjugal act. In Jer. 36:5, we read: "I am עצור, I cannot go into the temple." Evidently the reference is to his tabooed condition of impurity. Such passages as Deut. 20:5-7, 23:10-14, sound strange in our ears. It is the language of the taboo. Why this "contamination" that infects everything that the seminal fluid touches? We return again to the vague and, to the primitive man, incomprehensible mystery associated always with the reproductive organs. What the primitive man does not comprehend, he fears. Did

the ancient Hebrew comprehend the same mystery? Is this not another survival of a prehistoric period? Did not the ancient Hebrew see in the seminal fluid a "supernatural and deadly virus?" It is the primitive "taboo" having lost its "name" but not its signification. Why does the spermatozoa defile whatever it touches? Because it is "taboo" and the thing "taboo" is always feared because of its contagious and infectious character.

(4) *Circumcision*

The following terms are the more familiar Hebrew terms relating to circumcision: ערל (to be circumcised), ערלים (the uncircumcised), and מול (to circumcise). That the rite of circumcision is an ancient one, having survived from the pre-Mosiac period, will at once become manifest. It was known and practiced by practically all of Israel's neighbors. It is practiced by many races and tribes in Africa. The Egyptians have practiced this rite from time immemorial. According to Herodotus (11.36) the custom was known to the Europeans and the Kolchians. Josephus tells us that boys of thirteen were circumcised in Northern Arabia and adds that the rite was introduced into Palestine by the Egyptians. Dr. George A. Barton, in his *Semitic Origins* (p. 98), states that the rite is to be found among the Arabs, Syrians, Phoenicians and Egyptians and significantly adds that it is of a twofold nature, a sacrificial offering to the god and furnishes a tribal mark by which the deity may at once recognize his followers, and they may be known to each other. Circumcision as a sign of a ברית with יהוה is a very late interpretation and not a part of the original conception.[13] Only when the Israelites were in the midst of the "uncircumcized," *i. e.,* the Assyrians and Babylonians, would circumcision serve as a distinctive part of the cult. What, then, was the origin of circumcision? There are several answers to this question, all of which point in a given direction—the primitive "taboo." According to one authority[14] it is a defense, pri-

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[13] Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile,* p. 65.

[14] Gunkel, *Ueber die Beschneidung im At in Archiv. fur Papyrus—Forschung,* 11, 1 p. 13.

marily, against the baneful influence of demons. The cutting off of the "foreskin" is the supreme act in the initiatory rites at puberty among the Arabians, Kolchians in Asia, Egypt, Mandingos, Gallas Falashas, Abyssinians, some Bantu tribes in Africa, the Otaheitans, Tonga Islanders, some Melanesians, certain New South Wales tribes in Australia, the Atabascans, Nahuatl, Aztecs and certain tribes of the Amazon in America. In all these instances we find the same twofold idea, already cited, that the rite is a sacrifice to the tribal god and a mark which enables the god to identify his followers and that they may know each other. The only differentiating feature among the Hebrews is the time of the rite—on the eighth day instead of at puberty. The origin of the eighth day is still obscure. We shall, I think, find the germ of the original meaning of circumcision as practiced by the ancient Hebrews in Ex. 4:25-26, where Ziporah, the wife of Moses, casts the "foreskin" at the feet of Moses, uttering these words: "Surely a חתן דמים (a husband of blood) art thou to me." This looks like an offering —a sacrifice to the Deity. We think this is precisely the fact in the case. The ערלה is an offering of the body; the blood is the consecration of the life. The rite admits into the holy "assembly" and is thereafter the mark of membership. The youth (Gen. 17:25) has "devoted" himself to his God. Blood naturally is identified with and highly sanctifies such a gift. The supernatural power always associated with the reproductive organs, particularly at puberty, intensifies the sanctity of the rite. The significance of the practice among primitive peoples is undoubtedly an "entering"—"admission into"—not only the tribe, but a new sphere of existence. A radical change had taken place in every sense of the word. So the Hebrew passes from the "unclean" estate of the "uncircumcised" into the "holy" communion of the assembly of God. The underlying thought is the "sanctity" attaching to the rite—the consecration to God—while the secondary connotation is the "mark" of membership in the tribe.

The pre-Mosaic origin of the rite of circumcision is then, well established. That the rite was due to sanitary consideration is

a position pretty generally abandoned; that its real basis is the distinction between the "holy" and the "unclean" ערלים is pretty generally accepted.[15] In Josh. 5:2-3, 8-9, the Israelites were circumcised by Joshua with stone knives—a sign of antiquity, at the גבעת העלות (hill of foreskins), and the place was called, in consequence, Gilgal, "rolling away" the impurity of the "uncircumcised." The "taboo" nature of the rite is very evident in this reference. Jeremiah (9:25, 26) assigns the "foreskin" offering to the same class as hair offering[16] and similar bodily mutilations of a sacrificial nature. The prophet herein recognizes a gift of "life," which removes the act beyond the pale of similar forbidden heathen practices (Lev. 19:27, 21:5). This rite is surely a "taboo" but the precise character of the "taboo" is difficult to indicate. May it not have been a sacrificial offering to the mysterious powers—of procreation intimately associated with the male organ of reproduction? Blood at the very source of paternity would in itself attach great sanctity to the rite of circumcision. It looks like another of the numerous "blood" taboos.

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[15] Judg. 15:18; 1 Sam. 14:6, 17:26, 36:31; Is. 52:1; Ezk. 28:10, 31:18; 32:19, 21.

[16] *Tylor Primitive Culture,* II, 363, 364.

CHAPTER IV

FOOD TABOOS

The taboos on food are numerous. We have already caught glimpses of them in the references to the sacramental meal where the person offering the animal partakes of the "sacred" food. In fact "sacrifice" and "slaughter" were originally synonymous terms—לחם אלהים (food of the deity).[24] In the early period the Israelite might not partake of beef or mutton, other than in a religious manner. The sin offering was sacrosanct and hence not eaten at all. The piacular sacrifice might not even be touched. All this reflects the condition of primitive Semitic and not of Hebrew thought.[25] The divine command תזבח is, directly or indirectly, always accompanied by the emphatic restriction on blood (Deut. 12:15, 16). To be eaten at all, under any provision, the animal must be slain according to rite על-הדם. This has frequent parallels among primitive and advanced peoples.[26] The same restriction must be observed relative to the fat about the entrails because it is "holy." Before the establishment of the central sanctuary, all slaughter for food as well as for sacrifice, had to take place before the local altar.

Food taboos find frequent parallels and are widespread. The "sacred" animal is forbidden food as a general rule. Sacred fish, tabooed as food, were to be found in the rivers and pools of the sanctuaries throughout Syria, the lake of Atargatis at Hierapolis and the pools at the mosques of Tripolis and Edessa. It was fatal to eat the fish.[27] Swine was forbidden to all Semites as a food and at the same time most holy to Aphrodite. The Syrians would not eat the dove, and to touch it rendered one unclean for a day. There were sacred doves at Mecca. The laws of Manu (v. 5-16) bear a striking similarity to those of the Hebrews. Among the northern Semites the major deities had their sacred

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[24] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 216.
[25] George A. Barton, *A Sketch of Semitic Origins*, p. 97.
[26] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, P. I. 178.
[27] Sachau, *Reise*, p. 197.

animals which were tabooed as food. Among the Egyptians we find Apis, the "bull" incarnation of Ptah; Muevis and Bacis, the "bull," embodiment of Ra; Suchos, the crocodile, sacred to Sebak; Phœnix, the "heron," holy to Ra; and the cow, the incarnation of Hathor and other deities. The dietary restrictions among savage tribes are almost innumerable.[28] With reference particularly to food taboos, it may truly be said that there is an "underlying identity of thought throughout the Oriental world."

Let us turn our attention to the ראשית (first fruits) (Lev. 23:10-20). The idea is quite general among primitive agricultural peoples, that it would be fatal to partake of the harvest until the first fruits have been offered to the deity.[29] The first fruits are his and until he has received that offering the crop is forbidden food. The offering of the first yield makes the rest "lawful food" according to Lev. 19:23, for the first three years the fruit of an orchard must not be eaten. We early meet this requirement of the first fruits in Ex. 22:9, 23-19, 34-16. The priest is to receive the first of corn, wine, oil and fleece. Ezekiel even adds the first of everything, and the first of the dough (Ezk. 44:30). In the Law of Holiness we read that on the day after the Sabbath, the first fruits of the harvest were brought to the priest and a burnt offering and meal offering were presented. Until this ceremony is accomplished, no bread, parched corn, or fresh ears are to be eaten (Lev. 23:10-14). Corresponding to the "first fruits" of the field are the "firstlings" of the oxen and the sheep; they are to be dedicated to יהוה at the central sanctuary (Deut. 15:19). They are to be sanctified and eaten before יהוה (Deut. 15:19). The "firstling" continues but seven days with its dam and is then presented. In the Priest's Code the flesh is not shared by the ones bringing the "firstling" (Num. 18:15-18): "This flesh shall be thine." In the "first fruits" and "firstling" we have the undisguised primitive taboo. The rest of the harvest is strictly forbidden, unlawful food, until the deity has eaten his share. To partake of the "first fruits" or of the "firstling" would incur the anger of the

[28] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 272; *Kinship and Marriage*, ch. VIII.
[29] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II, 68-90.

offended deity. The forbidden food, if eaten, would mean retribution of a magical nature. Sickness or perhaps death would soon follow. This "sacred" food—the "firstling" and the "first fruits"—he must not touch because they belong to the deity; the "forbidden crop" he must not touch because of his dread of the demons and evil spirits whom the savage associates with every forbidden thing. It is but a short step from the superstition of the savage, who eats the "first fruits" with his god and by that sacramental meal, mysteriously makes the remainder of the crop, lawful food, and the offering of the first fruits by the early Hebrews, sometimes in a sacramental meal, which makes thereby the remainder of the harvest lawful food (Lev. 23:14).

But let us come more directly to the dietary laws of the early Hebrews (Lev. 11 and Deut. 14). זאת הבהמה אשר תאכלו ("these are the beasts which ye shall eat") is an expression common to Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In Deut. 14:7 we read: טמא הוא לכם ("they are unclean unto you"). In these two lists of animals a distinct line is drawn between the "clean" and the "unclean." It is permitted to eat the "clean" animal but forbidden to eat the "unclean." We observe three classes of animals: (1) those that dwell on the land; (2) those that live in the water, and (3) those that, for the most part, inhabit the air. The "unclean" quadrupeds of the first class are four: גמל (camel), שפן (coney), ארנבת (hare), חזיר (swine). Their flesh is טמא; their carcass is not to be touched. The division of the fish into "clean" and "unclean" is a most simple one: "Whatsoever hath fins and scales in the water . . . them shall ye eat" (Lev. 11:9). All others are an תועבה (abomination). Then follow the "unclean" birds, twenty in number.[30]

The laws dealing with the general subject of clean and unclean animals may be grouped under four headings: (1) Blood prohibitions; (2) animals dying with the blood "life" in them; (3) restrictions on fat; and (4) clean and unclean animals. What is the basis or what are the bases of these laws? We have raised a question which has yet to be answered satisfactorily. We shall

[30] Royden K. Yerkes, *The Unclean Animals of Lev. xi and Deut. xiv.*

not presume to fully answer it. Yet we are all prepared to go as far as W. Robertson Smith goes when he says: "I do not see how any historical student can refuse to class them (laws of uncleanness) with the savage taboos."[31] This is the consensus of opinion as to the clean and unclean animals of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The restriction upon eating the "thigh" is manifestly of greater antiquity than Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32:32). Being the seat of the reproductive organs, more or less sanctity would very naturally, from the primitive man's point of view, be attributed to the thigh. The animal dying of itself or being torn to pieces, is, of course, the very old reference to the נפש (the blood)—still remaining in the carcass, thereby rendering the flesh "unclean." We have already observed the character of taboo attaching to this form of prohibition. Repeated references in Leviticus and Deuteronomy are made to the contagious character of the "uncleanness" of the forbidden food (Lev. 11:32-38). This, as we have already noted, is quite commonly, if not the rule, an accompaniment of the savage taboo. In fact the Law of Holiness (Lev. 17:26) is replete with illustrations of the contagious and infectious character of "uncleanness" and also "holiness"—the one is just as serious as the other. In Isa. 34:13 the wild beasts of the desert —the jackal, ostrich, wild-cat and hyena—are classed with the שעירים (satyrs). They are the habitations of evil spirits and therefore "unclean." Magic is ever present in the notion and observance of taboo. This is most prominently brought out in Lev. 16:8, where עזאזל is the very embodiment of the evil power, as opposed to יהוה. This is a most primitive thought. Sacrificial flesh, when not eaten within the prescribed time is פגול (refuse meat) (Isa. 65:4). We read also (Lev. 7:21) that the flesh of the prohibited animals is שקץ. The various concepts of "cleanness" and "uncleanness" in Leviticus and Deuteronomy are more and more, as we proceed, at one with the concept of the taboo which has survived from the pre-Mosaic period. The evidence is unmistakable. We have not

[31] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 430.

established a rational basis for these dietary laws because there is none. The savage would say the forbidden food is charged with a dreaded power which he identified with evil spirits; the early Hebrew said the forbidden food was "unclean" and lets us draw our own conclusions. Did these food laws have their genesis in sanitary consideration? Then, why were certain animals selected and others rejected? Rather are we inclined to accept the conclusion of others, that sanitary laws followed, rather than preceded, the various ideas of "uncleanness." The "religion of Israel," as others have pointed out, hardly accounts for these food restrictions because we find numerous parallels among the primitive and advanced religions. It is also a fact of history that the more primitive the people, the more numerous the restrictions on diet. "It is futile to fumble at the lock with such rusty keys when anthropology has given us one which fits every ward."[32] In other words, it is the primitive taboo operating under the different nomenclature of "clean" and "unclean." How these particular animals came to be tabooed food is quite another question. Today it remains unanswered because of the scanty material of the early Semitic period. In all probability what we have in Leviticus and Deuteronomy is a composite taboo. The animals forbidden as food may have been former totems of the various tribes. This theory, the totemistic, is ably supported by W. R. Smith. Chewing the cud and parting the hoof (Lev. 11:4) is now regarded as rather the "method" of identifying the clean or unclean animal rather than the underlying principle of "cleanness" and "uncleanness" (Royden K. Yerkes, *The Unclean Animals of Leviticus and Deuteronomy*). Some have pointed out that the forbidden animals are those animals sacred to and hence sacrificed to the heathen deities. This restriction then would be a protest against idolatry and, since we read of the "unclean" nature of everything "foreign" and "heathenish," this doubtless has contributed its quota. Beasts of prey, feeding on unhallowed flesh, with the נפש in it, is at once apparent as a simple blood taboo. The birds

[32] A. S. Peake, Art. *Uncleanness*, Hastings' *Dict. Bible*, p. 826.

enumerated as unclean are, almost without exception, birds of prey and fall under the general blood "taboo." The swarming things, reptiles and beasts which inhabit the solitude of ruins, are conceived as possessed with demoniac powers. Here, of course, we identify magic as also in Ex. 23:19, 34:26; Deut. 14:21. The carcass (Lev. 11:24-38) is everywhere in primitive culture a source of pollution, and is avoided. The Hebrew טמא is the exact equivalent of the primitive "taboo." The institution at the very bottom of the dietary laws of the Hebrews is the "taboo."

CHAPTER V

TABOOS OF SACRED PERSONS

(1) *The King* (מלך)

The life of the king or chief was subject to numerous restrictions in early times. The person of royalty was sacred; the chief was a "holy" man who must not even be approached; and to eat anything which he had touched would be fatal. He must not suffer his feet to touch the ground lest the ground become "holy" and hence forbidden ground to his tribesmen. His hair, beard and nails must remain uncut because of their sanctity. The greater the chieftain or king, the more numerous the taboos he must observe. He must act, walk, stand, eat, drink, sleep in a prescribed manner—in a word his life is a thing highly taboo. Even the heir to the throne is subject to a number of taboos in ever-increasing numbers and intensity until his elevation. We find this idea of sacred kingship among the civilized peoples and even down to the modern period. Some Babylonian kings set themselves up as gods. The same was more generally true of the kings of ancient Egypt. It was unlawful to touch the Spartan king (Plutarch, *Agis*, 19). The king must be safeguarded, hence the numerous taboos surrounding him in early and later times.

We see the sacred character attaching to the Hebrew מלך after he is anointed. The king of Israel is frequently referred to as "my anointed," or his "anointed," or "the anointed of the Lord." It is profane to put forth one's hand against the anointed of יהוה (1st Sam. 26:9, 11, 23; 2d Sam. 19:22). Anointing comes down to us from a great antiquity. We find reference made to it in the Telel-Amarna letters. The institution of anointing was probably of very early Semitic origin. Isaiah refers to the "holy princes" (Isa. 43:28). It was by this act of anointing that things were consecrated—"made holy" to God. We find Jacob anointing stones at Bethel (Gen. 28:18; 35:14). The

tabernacle and its furnishings were anointed (Ex. 30:26, 40:10; Lev. 8:11). After every sin offering the altar must be reconsecrated, hence it is "anointed" (Ex. 29:36). When Israel asked for a king the divine choice was indicated by "anointing" (1st Sam. 10:1, 16:13). The essence of the "anointing" is the sacred character imparted to the person or being anointed. The anointed one is "filled with the spirit" of יהוה and is mysteriously changed into another being, capable of doing extraordinary deeds (1st Sam. 10:1; 2d Sam. 2:4; 2d Kings 9:6). The anointed one is sacrosanct—his person is inviolable. The very "oil" is a "holy oil" (Ps. 89:20, 21). To anoint and to consecrate are, for the most part, synonymous terms. In 1st Sam. 16:14 we read that the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. In other words, the king loses his "sanctity," the spirit of God, and becomes "unclean" because of the "evil spirit" which has come into him. His whole behavior in the episode of madness is that of one possessed by an "evil spirit." The connection here with magic is obvious. The anointing of kings was not peculiar to Israel. Egypt,[33] Greece and Rome consecrated by means of "anointing." The king of Tyre was anointed (Ez. 28:14). It is indeed true that in later Israel this rite of anointing assumed a more spiritual character but nevertheless there was always present the fundamental character of the anointing, *i. e.*, an immediate and physical relationship had been established with the Deity. The king and the Deity were one. When the priest at the holy place pours the holy "oil" over the king's head, he conveys the material and character of holiness to him and makes him a participator in Jehovah's superior life.[34] No doubt the institution of anointing was borrowed from the Canaanites, but the identification of the act with the descent of the spirit is peculiar of Jahwism. Anointing, then, testifies to the divinity of kingship in old Israel. The earthly kingship and the kingship of God are identical. The tap root of the divinity of kings goes deep into the hoary past.

[33] Dumichen, *History Inshcrift*, 1-12.

[34] Weinel, Art. *Mashah (Salben) und seine Derivate*, in ZAT xxviii, p. 1 (1898).

The "holy" character of the king is further strengthened by his priestly functions which he doubtless performed more or less regularly. The "royal priest" and the "priestly king" are not unfamiliar terms. There are significant traces of the king's performing priestly functions. Saul certainly feels that sacrifice is a part of the royal prerogative in 1st Sam. 13:9-11, 14:33. "David offered oxen and fatlings and danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod" (2d Sam. 6:13, 14). In 2d Sam. 6:18; 1st Kings 8:14, we behold David and Solomon blessing the people. The chief priest is evidently subject to the king in 2d Sam. 8:17; 1st Kings 2:26, 27, 35. We read of David's sons being named כהנים in 2d Sam. 8:18. Ezekiel explicitly states that the שר (prince) shall provide the sacrifice (Ezek. 46:4-6; 2d Chr. 30:24, 35:7). Jeroboam, in the northern kingdom ascended the altar and offered sacrifice (1st Kings 12:33). The sanctuary at Bethel is referred to in Amos 7:13 as a "royal" one. Ahaz, in 2d Kings 16:12, ascends the altar, offers the sacrifice, pours out the drink offering, and sprinkles the altar with blood. None but "holy" kings would presume to perform such "holy" functions—the functions of priests. It is fair to assume, from the facts just stated, that the early kings, at least, had a priestly character and exercised the priestly prerogative.

Thus we have established the sacred character of the king in ancient Israel. "The Lord's anointed" was almost the Deity.[35] The king and the cult are almost identical. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice and without an image and without an ephod, and without a teraphin" (Hos. 3:4). When the king perishes, the nation is in darkness (2d Sam. 21:17). "Anointing" rendered him *ipso facto* unviolable. The extreme nearness to, if not identity with, the Deity, is very real in such passages as: "They shall see the Lord their God and David their king" (Jer. 30:9); "in that day . . . the house of David shall be as God as the angel of the Lord before them" (Zec. 12:8); "then

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[35] S. A. Cook, *Religion of Ancient Palestine*, p. 61-63.

Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king" (1st Chr. 29:23). In these passages King and Lord are almost interchangeable terms. The king is "'holy" but not in the sense understood by the later prophets. His "holiness" is a physical quality, attaching itself at his anointing. He comes into possession of it through the mysterious operation of the "holy oil." The king is "holy" in much the same sense as the "chief" of the savage tribe is "holy." He is in such proximity to the Deity that his very person is hallowed and must not be touched. He is under a taboo.

(2) *The Priest*

The כהן (priest) in particular must guard against every form of defilement. If polluted in any way when he approaches the Deity, the result would be disastrous. In matters pertaining to "cleanness" and "uncleanness" the כהן speaks *ex cathedra*. His constant purpose is to avoid pollution and see that others do the same. The sanctity of the Deity is a dreadful thing. The priesthood insulates, as it were, the people from contact with the "divine "holiness." It is the priest who stands before יהוה (Deut. 18:5-7). The "stranger" who draws near to the altar or the veil shall be put to death (Num. 18:7). This idea of the "unapproachableness" of the Deity, because of his extreme sanctity which it would be fatal to come in contact with, is quite a common one. It is, as we shall observe, a vital factor in the יהוה cultus. Among primitive beliefs, it is the one compelling fear finding expression in the numerous taboos. Very naturally the priest, who stands "before" (in the presence of) the Deity, is regarded as a "holy man" who likewise must be approached with caution. In other words, his "sanctity" renders him "taboo."

This "holiness" attaching to the priest—a holiness always of a more or less materialistic character—is carefully protected. For example, the priest is to wear his official vestments only when engaged in the performance of his priestly office (Ex. 28:43, 16:23). He must guard against the pollution of his priestly garb (Ezek. 44:19). The one touching the raiment of the priest

becomes "hallowed" and is at once forfeited to the sanctuary. This immediately suggests the very early and widespread taboo against contact with the Deity or even contact with anything or person dedicated to him. It is dangerous and in many instances fatal. It is a very precarious thing to "look upon" the sacred presence (Ex. 3:6; 1st Kings 19:13; Gen. 16:13, 32:30; Ex. 19:21, 33:20). This is doubtless a survival from the pre-Mosaic period. A parallel to the custom of putting off one's clothes and substituting the "holy garment" is found in the circuit of the Caaba. The Arab makes the "circuit" either naked or in borrowed raiment. If he fails to make this change in garment before the "circuit" is made, then never again may he wear them nor sell them. The garb, because of its contact with the holy place, has been inoculated, as it were, with "holiness." It is, therefore, "taboo." Contact with the "holy thing," just as contact with the "unclean thing" results in a "taboo." A sacred volume or a phylactery defiles the hands. Another word about the change of garment. In the southern districts of New Zealand, an ordinary person, *i. e.*, not a holy one, would not think of entering a "wahi tapu" (sacred place) without first removing his clothes. If he failed to remove them they would thereafter be useless to him because of the taboo. The priest in Israel while officiating, must wear linen, not wool, because of the sweat and "unclean" secretion (Ezek. 44:17). The priest must boil the trespass offering and the sin offering. He must bake the meat offering in the holy chambers and not bear them into the outer court lest they "sanctify the people." This idea of "contagion" and "infection" constantly recurs. It is the inseparable accompaniment of the taboo. After the death of a near relative whose burial the priest has attended, the priest may not again enter the inner court and present his sin offering until seven days after his purification (Ezek. 44:26). Not the Levites but only the priest may approach the holiest vessels, such as the laver (Ex. 30:28). Let us remark, in passing, the degrees of "holiness" and "uncleanness" which have repeatedly been in evidence, in our study. To approach the sacred vessels in the inner sanctuary, would be death to the Levite and also to the priest

permitting the defilement. This gradation of "holiness" is particularly emphasized in the arrangement of the wilderness tabernacle. A portion of the land was set apart and was, therefore, "holy (Ezek. 45:1-8). On the four sides of the sacred area the tribes, three on each side, pitched their tents (Num. 2:1-6). Within this square there was another square on the sides of which were stationed the Levites and priests. Within the second square was the sanctuary—the court of the dwelling. And within the sanctuary, there was the "most holy" ark, the throne of יהוה. It was into this "holy of holies" that the high priest alone might enter. In other words, undue approach to the supreme sanctity must be guarded against. Among numerous peoples, both primitive and advanced, there is this same concept of the degrees of holiness. This, to us, very crude concept of holiness, insinuated itself far into the Jahweh cultus. There were likewise degrees of "uncleanness" which will become apparent when we consider the removal of the חרם.

The holy character of the priest is emphasized by certain restrictions imposed upon him. One of the most familiar parallels is the Flamen Dialis at Rome. He was forbidden to ride or touch a horse; to see an armed army; to have a knot in any part of his garment; to touch wheaten flour or leaven bread; to touch or name a goat, dog, raw meat, beans and ivy; to walk under a vine; to have his hair cut except by a freeman with a bronze knife; to touch a dead body or to enter the house of the dead; to see work done on holy days. His cut hair and nails must be buried.[36] Among the Todas the "holy milkman" was no less subjected to the most exacting restriction. The priest in Israel, to insure his "holiness," was subject to certain prohibitions. He must not marry a prostitute, a deflowered damsel, or a woman put away by her husband. He must select a virgin, or widow, both of whom must be of Israelitish stock. If a priest without children desires to remarry then he is forbidden to marry an incapable woman. He may not marry one from among the female proselytes, or an emancipated one, nor a daughter of a man formerly a slave, unless her mother was of the stock

[36] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, v. 2, p. 3.

of Israel (Lev. 21:7, 8). The priest may not draw near to a corpse or even assist in the obsequies except for a parent, a child, a brother or sister (Lev. 21:1-4, 11:12). He may not mourn for a wife. Under no circumstances may a priest show his grief by bodily mutilating himself. His body is sacred. A physical infirmity at once precludes him from the priestly office. In other words the priest is "holy." He observes these restrictions in order to preserve his "holiness." His "holiness" renders him peculiarly susceptible to "uncleanness." A violation of the prohibition—the taboo—would be more fatal to him, because of his holiness, than to the ordinary person. "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God" (Lev. 21:6). The priest was the anointed one (Lev. 10:7). He is one of the sanctified. "On him who nearest to me stands, show I my sanctity," thus runs an ancient oracle.

The High Priest

The כהן גדול (high priest) must observe the various restrictions imposed upon the priesthood in general. A great deal more, however, is required of the "high priest" because of his superior "holiness." In early Israel, this dignitary was known as the "chief priest" and in 2d Kings 11:4, 12:3, we see the importance of the role he frequently played. He is the personal representation of the Deity. The sanctity of the priesthood reaches its highest expression in the "high priest." Upon his forehead is the golden diadem, with the words "Holy to Jahweh" inscribed thereon. He alone may wear the Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30). He is the divine oracle. None but the "high priest" may enter the sanctum sanctorum. None but he can make atonement for his own pollution and that of his family (Lev. 4:3, 9:8). He atones for the guilt of the community (Lev. 4:16). The "holiness" of the high priest was safely guarded by many stringent rules, more stringent than those applying to the priests in general. He may marry only a virgin and she must be a daughter of Israel. He must not pollute himself by a dead body, even that of his father or mother (Lev. 21:11). As a token of his grief he may not rend

his garments nor let his hair grow long (Lev. 21:10). Any "uncleanness" in the high priest would be a national calamity. "For he is holy unto his God," is the constant reminder after every prohibition. He approaches nearest the Deity, hence he scrupulously observes the rule of "cleanness." The anointing oil has been poured upon his head, therefore, he is "one with God." He must not even go out of the sanctuary lest he "sanctify" the people or bring "uncleanness" into the holy place. He must not "profane his seed among the people." The "unclean" priest may not minister. The סגן ministers in the office of the "high priest" in the event of the latter's impurity. The high priest was inviolate. An unusual degree of holiness was ascribed to him. He alone could offer the sacrifice on the great day of atonement. In a word, he is sacrosanct. Just like the priest or chief of a primitive tribe, because of the "holiness" attaching to him he is feared and avoided. J. G. Frazer, in his admirable work, *The Golden Bough,* gives numerous instances of this. These parallels are not accidents. It is the old taboo of a person charged with a supernatural energy, extremely dangerous, which the ancient Jew denominated "holiness"—but not the "ethical" or "moral" holiness which at once suggests itself to the man of advanced culture. This "high priest" was "taboo"—most highly taboo because he is nearest the Deity.

(3) *The Nazirite*

The Arabic ihrām was a self-imposed restriction to which the Arab subjected himself until he had performed a certain holy vow. In Jahwism we meet the נזיר (the consecrated one). The נזיר (Num. 6:21) dedicated himself to the performance of a holy vow. This vow meant the observance of certain forms of abstinence—forms which were doubtless more numerous than the ones recorded in the Scriptures. The vow was temporary or for life. The restrictions generally were of a threefold character: (1) he must leave his hair unshorn; (2) he must abstain from wine and intoxicating liquor; (3) he must avoid the pollution of a corpse. Even the mother who is to dedicate her child to the Naziriteship must abstain, while pregnant, from wine, intoxicat-

ing drink and unclean food. The Nazirite was a distinct organ of Jahwism. We find reference to this institution in Judges 13: 4-14, 16, 17, and Amos 2:11. We are inclined to believe, that the number of Nazirites was greater than the references would seem to indicate. During the days of his vow the Nazirite is "holy" (Num. 6:5). He has been consecrated upon "his head." Samson and Samuel at once present themselves as the historic Nazirites. Consecration to God is the underlying principle of the Nazirite-ship. During the period of his vow, the Nazirite is inviolate. He was the embodiment of a certain reaction, particularly in the eighth century B. C., against the baneful influence of the Canaanites. In a very unusual sense, the Nazirites were "holy unto the Lord" through this vow of consecration, which entailed certain rigid abstinences, which quite commonly are observed by "holy men." Let us turn for a moment to the law of the Nazirites (Num. 6:1-21). We shall note here some familiar and significant expressions. The recurring word is "separation." "The Nazirite himself is a 'separated' man." He must "separate" himself from wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, liquor of grapes, moist grapes or dried (Num. 6:3), because indulgence in these things would "defile" him. He shall suffer no razor to come upon his head. He shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow, because he is "holy" and to shear his locks would mean "'pollution." It is quite evident that we are again treading familiar ground. The "holiness" is a physical quality. All the days of his "separation"—holiness to the Lord —he shall come at no dead body (Num. 6:6). Even in the event of the death of his father or his mother, or his brother, or his sister, he shall not make himself unclean" (Num. 6:7). In this respect he stands with the high priest (Lev. 21:11). If one should suddenly die in his presence, then he is "defiled." We recognize this language at once as that of the "taboo" pure and simple. We are again dealing with the "contagion" and "infection" of "uncleanness." Even if he violate his vow unwittingly, he is "unclean"—the automatic working of the taboo. He must at once reconsecrate himself, *i. e.*, regain his holiness. His pollution is that of the "first degree" when he offends (Lev.

14:12-21), and the days of his separation begin *de novo* from the day of his purification. This is due, without doubt, to the Nazirite's superior sanctity which renders him peculiarly susceptible to the virus of "uncleanness." We found this same thing with respect to the priests, and the high priest in particular. The closer the proximity to the Deity, the greater the degree of sanctity; but on the other hand, the susceptibility to defilement increases in the same ratio. We have found this to be true of the chief or priest in primitive culture. It is true of the Nazirite—he is a tabooed man.

But perhaps the most distinguishing mark of the Nazirite is his "unshorn hair." Here we have irrefutable testimony in behalf of the survival of a primitive taboo. The "head" and the "hair" are peculiarly tabooed parts of the body, as numerous illustrations from all parts of the world would show, had we but the space. Permit us to cite just a few. The Arab warrior will not have his hair shorn until the war of revenge is concluded. According to W. R. Smith,[37] among primitive peoples, the hair is the vital part of the body and is frequently identified with the seat of life. And this eminent authority adds that all over the world persons under a "taboo" regard their hair as sacred and inviolable. To cut the hair would be profanation of a holy growth—its life makes the Nazirite one with the Deity. If the Nazirite "defile" himself, then his hair is at once shaved off. It, according to the Mishnah (Temurah, VII, 4) must be buried because of its dangerous character (cf. W. R. Smith, *Religion of Semites,* pp. 350, 369). Into the temple of Astarte at Hierapolis the kinsmen of a deceased person, might not come for a period of thirty days after the death and then only after their heads were shaven.[38] We find that the mourners in ancient India cut their hair at the end of the period of mourning. Among the tribes at Agweh on the west coast of Africa, we still find the custom of cutting the hair and burning it at the end of the mourning period. The same practice is observed by some Australians.[39]

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[37] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites,* pp. 324, 483.
[38] Lucian, *De Dea Syria,* p. 53.
[39] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* 1, 387, 389.

All this is very plain to us. The "uncleanness" of death has infected the person. The peculiar nature of the hair, the seat of life—life itself—is such that it must be at once cut off and burnt, as an offering to the offended Deity. We read in Num. 6:18, "The Nazirite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire." In view of the foregoing primitive practices, this is perfectly intelligible to us. The Nazirite has become "unclean." He must at once have his hair shorn and cast into the fire. The "hair" is in the same category as that of the "flesh" of the sin offering—it is sacrosanct. The shorn hair then, like the "blood," is regarded as the נפש (the life) and is presented as the blood was invariably presented, as an offering par excellence to the Deity. The risk of profaning the hair was great, hence extreme caution was always exercised by the "consecrated"—"tabooed" person—whether he was a Maori chieftian or a Nazirite. (The reference to the locks of Absalom, 2d Sam. 14:26, are construed by some as indicating his Nazirite character.) Burial of the hair or burning the hair were the simplest and, to the savage mind, the most direct means for the immediate union of the נפש with the divine life. In the light of the foregoing facts, this language is not easily misunderstood. The sacrosanct character of the hair makes it the most efficacious offering to be brought by the defiled Nazirite.

Parallels as already stated are numerous. The children of Syria cut off their hair and presented it as an offering to the Deity.[40] The hair offering was practiced by the ancient Arabs.[41] The New Zealanders shear their hair as a sacrificial act at the tomb.[42] The hair of persons under a taboo is of a superior sanctity. The Nazirite is such a person. He is the "consecrated" one—the one set apart. His hair is "holy." We have here very plainly the survival of the primitive "taboo" on hair.

[40] Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, p. 160.
[41] Merrill, *East of Jordan*, p. 511.
[42] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*.

CHAPTER VI

DIVINE TABOOS

(1) *The Firstborn*

The sanctity of the 'firstborn" is of great antiquity. The blood of the firstborn animal was especially effective against demoniac influences. A measure of holiness was doubtless, at a very early time, ascribed to all animals and to domestic ones in particular. This association with supernatural powers at once rendered these animals more or less taboo. Only in the sacramental meal is this holy flesh partaken of. The animal of the piacular sacrifice is always the firstborn. To people in the nomadic stage, the sacrifice of the firstborn animal would be of the first magnitude. Such sacrifices, it is reasonable to believe, must have been common to all the early Semitic peoples in the pastoral period. As to the sacrifice of the firstborn male children the way is not quite so clear. The few Biblical references are rather negative in character. The offering of Jepthah's daughter means but little because of its isolation. The reference (2d Kings 3:27) to the king of Moab offering up his eldest son as a burnt offering is evidently a trace of what was, at an earlier period, not such an uncommon sacrifice. Special sanctity would attach, as we shall presently show, to the firstborn in a particular manner. We can readily appreciate the gradual process by which the firstborn male child for actual sacrifice would finally give place to the firstborn of animals (Gen. 22). The payment of a "redemption" price would still further facilitate the transition.

The firstborn in Israel were among the קדשים (holy things), as differentiated from the חלין (secular things). The בכורות pertain to the "firstborn" of men and animals (Ex. 13:2-16): "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn whatsoever openeth the womb—both of man and of beast; it is mine." This is an emphatic decree of the divine ownership of the "firstborn" without any qualification. The later law (Lev. 27:27) pro-

vides that if the domestic animals (the firstlings) could not be sacrificed, because of a natural defect, then the animal was to be put to death. It couldn't come into common use because the firstling is a חרם (a devoted thing). "None devoted which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 27:39). Among the Arabs, however, such a tabooed animal was turned loose. The important fact to be noted is the חרם. The firstling is "holy" in the first degree." There is no redemption price. It is wholly the Lord's. This is the very essence of taboo. It cannot be used for common purposes. Its qualities are supernatural. According to Lev. 27:26, the sanctity of the firstling of beast is congenital. The firstling of the beasts, which should be the Lord's firstling, no man shall sanctify it; whether it be ox or sheep, it is the Lord's. Its sanctity is original. This superior holiness attaching to the firstborn is borne out by the fact that in the piacular holocausts (1st Sam. 7:9) the beast of sacrifice is always the "firstling." This is true, in particular, of the paschal lamb, which we shall treat more specifically in a later paragraph. In another law (Num. 18:15) the firstborn of beasts are the portion of the priests; the firstling of unclean beasts and of man are to be redeemed. This portion of the priests is quite similar to the rē'shîth and bikkûrîm (first fruits). In the priests' code, it is prescribed that the firstling be assigned to the priests (Lev. 7:34). The practice here described and that in Ex. 13:2-12 evidently pertain to different periods. "I hallowed unto me every 'firstborn' " is the constant refrain of "divine ownership."[43] The firstborn is strictly "taboo."

It is, however, the פסח (passover), that greatest of the early feasts of the Jews, which discloses the pre-Mosaic character of the feast, of the "firstborn" both of man and beast. The paschal lamb was beyond a peradventure a firstling eaten at a sacramental meal by the family. The flesh is sacrosanct, but we have already referred to the occasions of the sacramental meal, at which the "holy" flesh was eaten, in order to share the "divine life" of the Deity. There are numerous parallels among

[43] Baudissen, *Studien*, 11-63.

the primitive peoples to whom we have already made reference. The Passover, it is generally admitted, goes back to a period anterior to the exodus from Egypt. Again the fact seems to indicate that Israel had appropriated an already existing feast and by associating it with the exodus had given it a somewhat different significance. We are most certainly examining a well-established feast at the time of the exodus. In Ex. 12:1-13, the feast of the Passover is described in detail. The "firstling" may be either a lamb or a kid without blemish (Lev. 22:19). The animal must be a male and one year old. When the animal is slain the "blood" is to be sprinkled upon the lintel and door posts of the house. Here again the magic quality of the "blood" to ward off the evil power is in evidence. Blood is always and everywhere, as in this instance, forbidden food. The flesh is not to be eaten raw, because of the restriction on blood. The sacrosanct character of the "firstling" is such that it must be roasted without being dismembered. The flesh is so "holy" that, what is not eaten on the night of the Passover must be "burnt" before morning lest it become "defiled." Only the circumcized man participates in this sacramental meal. The presence of a foreigner would be defiling. Certain Arab offerings bear a striking similarity to the Passover, *i. e.*, sacrifice of the camel, which was eaten without dismemberment and at night.[44]

Various explanations of the origin of the feast of the Passover have been advanced. The most popular one is that which identifies it with the exodus from Egypt. This position, of course, has been generally abandoned. A second theory is that of "atonement." The paschal lamb is offered in the stead of guilty man. This is based on its piacular nature (Ex. 12:5). This position is taken by Ewald (*Antiquities of Israel*, p. 352). The "'blood covenant" is still another explanation. But the explanation which seems to go to the very root of the matter is the one which identifies it with the "offering of the firstborn."[45] This is the view most generally accepted. An eminent authority, Ewald, associates the great feast of the Passover with the offer-

[44] Wellhausen, *Reste d arab. Heidenhines*, p. 119.
[45] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 4 p. 82-117.

ing of the "firstborn." The Passover is the festival when the shepherd offered the "firstling" of the flock or herd. The "firstborn" belonged to the Deity. This idea is very old and most primitive. "Thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's" (Ex. 13:12). "Moses would lead the Israelites that they might hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (Ex. 5:1). They were to go with cattle and sheep (Ex. 3:18, 7:16, 8:27). They are to observe a "feast"—an already well-established feast. This was doubtless the Passover feast—the feast of the firstborn. It has been noted that this is the only feast represented in the Old Testament as established before the exodus. The point we are seeking to establish is this: The Passover harks back to the pre-Mosaic period—probably the nomad stage. The evidence strongly favors the argument that this feast was the offering of the firstborn. Hence, what we have in the feast of the Passover is not the commemoration of an historical deliverance, but the survival, under a different name, of the very old "taboo" on the firstborn, particularly the male. The important part played by the blood is what we would naturally expect in the offering of a sacred animal. We have also pointed out that the sacramental meal is not uncommon in the sacrifice of a sacrosanct animal. "If we keep within the bounds of our records it can hardly be denied that the sacrifices at this feast (the Passover) were, for the most part, if not entirely, the "firstborn."[46] With reference to the sacrifice of the firstborn of man, we have but the faintest traces in the Old Testament. Jahweh smites the "firstborn" of the Egyptian because Pharaoh had prevented the offering of the "firstborn" of the cattle to Israel's God. But in the early history of the Hebrews they appear to have reached that stage when the "firstborn" of man could be and was redeemed—"all the firstborn among thy children shalt they redeem" (Ex. 13:13; Num. 3:49). An extreme degree of sanctity attached to the "firstborn" of beasts. Because of this sacrosanct character the firstborn was a "tabooed animal."

[46] W. J. Moulton, Art. *Passover,* Hastings' *Dict. Bible,* p. 690.

(2) *The "Herem"*

The חרם of the early Hebrews was, as we shall endeavor to show, the savage taboo carried to the extreme degree. All that has been said of the primitive taboo in the preceding chapters may be repeated emphatically, with reference to the חרם. This "ban" is the most fearful phase of the early taboo. The chieftian of a savage tribe, being himself under a taboo, we find that his hut, utensils, clothes and other personal property are also under a taboo, because all that he touches becomes tabooed. The tribesman, not himself under a taboo, in order to protect his property, will frequently put it under a special taboo. This practice is quite common among primitive peoples. The tabooed thing, therefore, becomes the forbidden thing. The חרם of the ancient Hebrews is a "ban" of the most stringent character. The verbal form, חרם, has a primary meaning "to shut up" from common use. The Hiphil form of the verb means "to consecrate, to devote to God;" and also to "devote to destruction." This latter meaning expresses the idea of the חרם. It is anything or person "devoted," "dedicated," to destruction. The sense in which we have been using the Hebrew קדש (holy) is not altogether that of the חרם. The latter term signifies a complete separation from human contact which, strictly speaking, does not apply to the former term. Such was the severity of this "ban," that anything thus "devoted" could not be redeemed. Milder forms of the חרם, however, will be cited. The nearest English equivalent of the חרם is the "accursed thing." The immediate effect of the "ban" is to withdraw the "accursed thing" from common use. This, we have frequently observed, is also characteristic of the taboo. The "ban" at once establishes divine ownership. The thing under the "ban" is irrevocably His. The vow of the person who "devotes" the thing is most binding; "no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord, of all he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possessions, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be

put to death" (Lev. 27:28, 29). In other words, the man who "devotes" a thing, vows to destroy it. The person or thing "devoted" is inviolable. The greatest possible "holiness" attaches to it. The contagion of the חרם is fatal. Contact means death, because the devoted object is one of the קדש קדשים ליהוה (holy of holy things to the Lord).

All wars were holy wars, and the warriors were hallowed as we have previously indicated. It is not surprising then, that many of our references are to war and its accoutrements (Num. 21:2; Jos. 6:17; 1st Sam. 15:3). Several motives may prompt such a "vow of devotion," namely, dread of everything "foreign" as "unclean;" intense hatred of those whose God is not יהוה; foregoing the spoils of war; or thanksgiving for the victory. The early practices witnessed the literal execution of the חרם. Every man and beast was slain, and the houses and other property were burned or otherwise destroyed. With reference to the siege of Jericho, we read: "They utterly destroyed (ויחרימו) all that was in that city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword" (Josh. 6:21). We find a somewhat milder form of the "ban" in Deut. 2:34, 35, where, after the men and women are put to death, the cattle and the spoil of the cities are taken as prey. A less severe חרם is also recorded in Num. 31:7 with reference to the Midianites. The "ban," while known and practiced by many ancient peoples, seems to have been most rigorously observed by the Hebrews. This institution, like many others, was inherited from the pre-Mosaic period. In the Jahweh cultus it received a deeper religious sanction. Jahweh was a jealous god. He was pre-eminently a war god. The Israelites were his people—"holy unto the Lord." Hence their enemies were His enemies. The "ban" in time of war would then be a most stringent one. The thing "devoted" is therefore "holy unto the Lord," because it is His property. The degree of sanctity attaching to the "devoted thing" is such that it must be destroyed, otherwise it is a constant menace to the individual and the community. The thing or person under the ban, in other words, is under a "taboo" of the first degree. The "holiness" ascribed to the banned object

is precisely the same character as that of the taboo, *i. e.*, of a materialistic quality and therefore non-ethical and non-moral. Furthermore, that most common characteristic of the taboo, namely, contagion, is particularly true of the חרם. It is the forbidden thing—removed absolutely and, in the early חרם, irrevocably from common use. All this is especially true of the taboo of savage tribes. What we have before us in the case of the "ban" is the primitive taboo carried to the severest extreme.

There is the ban of the "first grade" and there is the ban of the "second grade." The former "ban" means the destruction, root and branch, of everything "devoted;" the latter ban, a milder form, permits a redemption price in certain instances. We found the same to be true in dealing with the "firstborn" of man whose dedication in sacrifice was modified by the "redemption price." References to these "first" and "second grade" "bans" have already been given. This idea of the "degree" of holiness or uncleanness, we have had occasion to note throughout our study. In the matter of purification, to which we shall presently address ourselves, this idea of gradation—degrees of sanctity or pollution—will become more evident.

The instances of the חרם in the Old Testament are numerous. We shall advert only to the most noteworthy examples. Achan, who had stolen the accursed thing and secreted it in his tent is stoned to death and his property is destroyed (Josh. 7). Because of the outrage at Gibeah the Benjamites were slain and their cities destroyed (Judges 20:48). The one who violates the "ban" comes under the same "ban" and is destroyed. By touching the "devoted" thing, the offender becomes "devoted"—both are accursed. Saul's failure to carry out the command to "utterly destroy (חרם) the Amalekites draws forth the rebuke of Samuel: "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?" (1st Sam. 15:19). Again in Deut. 2:34, we find the severity of the חרם in the words: "We took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed (נחרם) the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain:

only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took" (Deut. 2:34, 35). One of the most stringent of "bans" is directed against the Canaanites in these words: "The Lord thy God . . . shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed . . . the graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee lest thou be snared therein" (Deut. 7:23-25). There is a certain relentless vengeance compelling the fulfilment of the חרם. God Himself has החרים them, He has delivered them to the slaughter (Isa. 34:2) and in Malachi 4:6, God warns that He may smite the earth with a חרם. As already pointed out, there is a mild mitigation in some forms of the "ban" (Deut. 2:16, 3:6; Josh. 8:2-27, 11:14). The cattle and the spoil are frequently reserved as "prey." But even in these milder forms of the חרם, there is to be felt the fierce wrath of the offended deity which certainly must have inspired dread in the hearts of those under the "ban." This is the very atmosphere in which the taboo thrives. The strength of the taboo is this same dread of the supernatural powers who will visit destruction upon the offenders. The חרם was not unknown to the Assyrians (2d Kings 19:11) and the reference on the Moabite stone (l. 11) points to a חרם.

This brings us to the penalty for the violation of the חרם. The punishment to be inflicted upon the savage who trespasses a "taboo" is both real and certain. This we have already pointed out. He who transgresses a "ban" immediately falls under that ban and becomes "devoted" to destruction. The conclusion here is inescapable. The חרם is the mechanical taboo. The reference to Achan (Josh. 7:1) is an instance. To appropriate a "thing" which is "devoted" is most heinous and means utter destruction (Deut. 7:25). Saul's failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites is another instance of the violated חרם and its inevitable consequences (1st Sam. 15). It is quite obvious that we are dealing with a "taboo" most primitive in character. The חרם is a survival of Semitic heathenism. It would, indeed, be quite surprising if we did not find certain traces of a

pre-Mosaic period. Institutions are not born in a day, neither do they die in a day. They persist under one form or another, and with various significations, long after their origin and primitive significance have been forgotten. But in the instance of the חרם we have a primitive taboo, which is all but called a taboo in the Biblical narrative.

CHAPTER VII

REMOVAL OF THE TABOO (LEV. 4-6)

(שלום AND אשם)

"Taboo," as we have observed, is a world-wide institution. Taboos are especially numerous among the primitive peoples. The restrictions imposed are likewise numerous and irksome. If no provisions were made, by prescribed expiations, for the removal of certain taboos, life, already circumscribed by permanent taboos, would soon be unbearable. Hence, we find among the savage tribes, as well as among the civilized peoples of antiquity, certain rites and ceremonies calculated to remove, at a given time, the taboo and its attending restrictions. The savage, who has been in contact with a corpse, is "unclean"—"tabooed"—but if, at the end of a prescribed period, he performs certain ablutions, he is freed from the taboo. The warrior who has slain his foe is "taboo" because of the shed blood, but he does not remain in this perilous condition indefinitely. The woman at childbirth is highly "taboo" and must, for that very reason, continue for a longer period in her "tabooed" condition; but if she perform the necessary rite—and perform it she must, because of tribal considerations—at the specified time, she is no longer under the taboo. The removal of the "taboo"—certain temporary taboos—is thus provided for by tribal custom.

We find the same provision in early Israel. There are ways and means of ridding oneself of אשם (guilt)—the taboo. These means are the various forms of טהרות (purifications). In Lev. 4:6 the primary means for the removal of guilt is the זבח שלמים (peace offerings). To free Israel from the guilt of the crime against the Gibeonites, seven sons of Saul must be offered in sacrifice (2d Sam. 21:3). The mother at childbirth, because of her uncleanness must offer a lamb for a burnt offering and a dove for a sin offering. Then she will be clean. Purification in other words, provides the medium by which the

"uncleanness"—taboo—is removed. This is the content of the term. The person ceremonially "unclean" may not enter the "sanctuary"; neither may he indulge in the ordinary pursuits of life. "Defiled" garments must be washed to be free of the pollution clinging to them (Gen. 35:2). Even the altar and sanctuary, because they stand in the midst of "unclean" people, must be cleansed (Ezek. 43:18, 45:18). In Lev. 12 and 15 we find numerous prescriptions for purification and atonement. Washing with water was doubtless the primitive means of removing the lighter forms of defilement. Where the uncleanness was of a more serious nature, there we find a more elaborate ceremonial. Such, for example, is the ritual of the "red" heifer. (Num. 19).

In our study we have noted that the greatest sanctity seems to attach to the "blood." The dead body—the carcass—is the last word in "uncleanness." Contact with the dead results in a long sustained "pollution." This particular taboo—for "uncleanness" and "taboo" are now synonymous terms to us—can be removed only by the מי חטאת, ("water of impurity"). This particular form of lustration is prepared in a manner suggesting the great antiquity of the rite (Num. 19). The heifer in the first place must be "red"—the taboo color. Blood is sprinkled seven times towards the sanctuary. Blood, the agent to which attaches the greatest "sanctity," operates to remove the greatest "defilement," contact with a corpse. This is not without significance, when we remember the part that blood plays in magic. The environs of death are the favorite haunts of evil spirits. This contact is not accidental. The whole carcass, without being dismembered in any manner, is burnt without the camp. Like the "firstling," the flesh of the heifer is sacrosanct. The one purpose of all this is to secure the "ashes" (Num. 19:9), but not for the purpose of sacrifice. These "ashes" supply the needed potency to the holy water, with which it is mixed, for the removal of the "contagion of death." "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it, מי חטאת, (water of impurity), on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be טהר (clean); but if he purify not himself

the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean" לא יטהר (Num. 19:11, 12). The taboo of death, one of the most dreaded of all taboos, is thus removed. If a person under a "death taboo" fails to avail himself of the מי חטאת he shall be cut off from Israel (Num. 19:13). Thus we observe this extraordinary rite for the removal of this particular taboo. The entire chapter (Num. 19) is taken up with the pollution of death. It is somewhat of an anomaly, however, that the person—who must be a "clean" person—who sprinkles the "water of impurity" upon the unclean person—becomes, in turn "unclean" himself, because of contact with the מי חטאת. Here again we observe, as in the beginning of this treatise, that the line of demarcation between the "holy" and the "unclean" is not always easy to distinguish. It is rather singular that reference to the "water of impurity" in this code, appears to be the oldest reference. The practice of using medicated waters, however, is not peculiar to the Hebrews. What we have here is evidently another trail by which we follow Israel back into a primitive Semitic period. Parallels to the "water of impurity" we find in the Zendavesta in its reference to the gomez (oxen's urine) to remove the pollution of death; in the Vendidad (V., 51) the mother of a stillborn child must drink gomez mixed with ashes for the purification of her womb; "gomez" is also the agent for the removal of pollution from vessels (Vendidad, VII., 73-75); according to the same authority (VIII., 11-13) those who bear a corpse must bathe in the urine of sheep and oxen; in India the urine of the cow is regarded as highly purificatory (Oldenburg, Veda, p. 490). The Romans also used ashes in much the same manner.[47] Among the primitive peoples, water with a magical ingredient was a common lustration. The Navajos of North America must remove the taboo of death with a specially prepared water. The Basuto warriors must bathe in magic waters in order to free themselves from the guilt of blood. The Zulus observe a certain ablution after contact with the dead. Many similar uses of lustration might be mentioned.[48] The use of the מי חטאת

[47] Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 639, 725, 733.

[48] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, 433-436, 437. J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, I, 322-325 and III, 397-481.

for the removal of the death taboo is very plainly associated with "magic." In other words, we find precisely, in the means for the removal of the death taboo, described in Num. 19, just what we discovered in the removal of the savage taboo—a rite, more or less associated with magic. Purification removes a "taboo."[49]

The more common means for the removal of the "taboo" among the ancient Hebrews are to be found in Lev. 4-6. It is in these chapters that the terms אשם (guilt) and זבח שלמים (peace offering) are in real opposition. He who is אשם is under a taboo, he who makes a זבח שלמים is free of the taboo. The effect of sacrifice is to remove the particular taboo which the offerer is under. This is the position held, with regard to sacrifice, by writers of the anthropological school.[50] The sacrifice restores the lost "cleanness." The operation is a magical one. The mysterious force which makes "unclean" is displaced by a no less mysterious force which makes "clean." The beast of sacrifice is "holy" and its "holiness" is transmitted to the person of the worshipper in the sacramental meal. In such a meal we have the primitive notion, in more elegant language, however, of "eating the god." Numerous illustrations are to be found in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. In this sacramental meal the guilt is removed and the worshipper becomes "clean" again. In these various offerings, particularly the burnt offering, peace offering and sin offering, the blood is the important feature. For example, in the sin offering for the priest, it is דם (blood) of the bullock which the priest takes into the sanctum sanctorum and with which he anoints the horns of the altar. It is the blood which has the divine life. Moreover, it is the blood of the sacrificial beast, which is poured at the bottom of the altar (Lev. 4:7). Then the fat—peculiarly the food sacred to the Deity—is burned upon the altar of the burnt offering (Lev. 4:8). These are the two potent factors which bring about the removal of the worshiper's taboo, whether it be the priest, the congregation, the ruler or the people. In the

[49] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 405.
[50] W. P. Paterson, Art. *Sacrifice*, Hastings' *Dict. Bible*, vol. IV, p. 330.

event of the worshiper's inability to furnish two turtle doves for his trespass offering, "then he shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour" (Lev. 5:11). The priest then takes a handful of it and burns it upon the altar and the guilt is thus removed from the suppliant. Much the same language is used throughout these chapters with respect to the offering for guilt. The process by which the taboo of guilt is removed is purely magical and is, perhaps, most apparent in the offering on the great day of atonement (יום הכפרים).

The Hebrew term כפר is difficult to translate. There scarcely seems to be an English equivalent. Its meaning is quite similar to that of חטא (to un-sin) and to טהר (to purify —cleanse). To make atonement for, is to "cleanse," to "purify;" hence to remove the "guilt"—the "taboo." To accomplish this atonement for the nation as a whole and the sanctuary, we come to the very climax in the Levitical purificatory system. The very breath of the atonement is in these words: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). Let us bear these words in mind as we follow, step by step, the means for the removal of the guilt from the nation and the sanctuary. The high priest first offers a bullock as a sin offering to atone for his own guilt. The "blood" of the bullock is sprinkled in front of the mercy seat—with his finger he sprinkles blood seven times—the holiest of the holy places. The contact of the special virtue residing in the blood with the divine presence results in the removal of the guilt of the high priest and his house. The high priest proceeds to atone for the "guilt" of the people. A goat is slain and the blood is sprinkled as before in the "holy of holies." The blood is sprinkled again upon and before the mercy seat. The high priest alone may at this time enter the tabernacle. Seven times the altar is sprinkled with blood. He puts the blood upon the horns of the altar, which is "before the Lord." He sprinkles the altar seven times with blood and thus "hallows" it from the "uncleanness" of the children of Israel (Lev. 16:19). Then follows the ritual of the "scape goat." The guilt of Israel

is confessed and laid upon the head of the goat and a fit ("clean") man leads him away into the wilderness (Lev. 16:21). "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and, he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Lev. 16:22). In the first part of this ritual of atonement we note the emphasis upon "blood." Throughout Leviticus there is this constant refrain, "For it is the blood that maketh atonement" (Lev. 17:11). The power which brings about the removal of the "guilt" is resident in the "blood." It is the blood that atones. The "scape goat" infected with the guilt of the people, defiles the hand of the "clean" man who leads him into the wilderness, the dwelling place of Azazel, the evil spirit. There are many analogies to the "scape goat" of Leviticus.[51] But the removal of the "guilt" from the worshipers in the first place is brought about by the "blood."

[51] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II, 182.

CONCLUSION

We shall now summarize the results of our study. Have we adduced the facts necessary to the support of the conclusions reached? Have we succeeded in identifying the various Hebrew proscriptions with taboo? We think that a résumé of the facts presented and the arguments advanced will answer these two questions in the affirmative.

At the outset we laid particular emphasis on the primitive concept of "holiness" in contradistinction to that which suggested itself to the later prophets, *i. e.*, the utter absence of any ethical or moral connotation. We have stressed, throughout this discussion, the physical quality of holiness as understood by the early Hebrews. Numerous passages were cited and dwelt upon, to support this view. This conception of "holiness," we observed, was distinctly a characteristic of taboo. Particular attention was also directed to the contagious and infectious character of taboo. The transmissibility of "holiness" and "uncleanness" among the ancient Hebrews, as we pointed out, finds an exact parallel in the contagious character of taboo. Numerous references to Old Testament passages clearly support this argument of transmissibility. It finds comprehensive expression in these words: "If a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things . . . he shall also be unclean" (Lev. 2).

In our discussion of the marriage degrees, stress was laid upon that form of marriage known as polyandry—the union of one wife with many husbands. Polyandry, we observed, appeared to be, though not exclusively, the form of marriage among the early Hebrews. "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him" (Lev. 18:6). Here we have the basis of the forbidden degrees. But there is, as we pointed out, a deeper reason or reasons other than that of consanguinity or affinity as

we understand these terms. The forbidden degrees, as recorded in Lev. 18:7-17 and 20:10-21, involve more than one factor. Doubtless, we have here a combination of various taboos. The "matriarchate" was probably a contributing cause because the maternity of the child could be established. Hence we find the numerous restrictions pertaining to uterine relationship, while the utmost freedom was permitted on the paternal side. The mother's relationship to the child is at once evident. The child has issued from her. She is, therefore, intimately associated with the source of life. All those "near of kin" stand in this same intimate relationship to each other. This "kinship" implies "blood relationship"—"for the blood is the life." This applies to affinity as well as to consanguinity. What we have in these eleven cases of affinity, and six of consanguinity, enumerated in the "forbidden degrees," is really the old blood taboo. These relationships imply "one blood" (one flesh). The magical character attaching to blood we dwelt upon at some length. It is a fundamental taboo which has doubtless given rise to the "forbidden degrees." Incest would be a gross violation of this blood taboo—those near of kin. Death, the extreme penalty, is visited upon the offender.

In like manner we identified the taboo in the case of the woman during menstruation. We referred to the prevalence of this particular taboo among peoples of primitive and advanced culture. The menstrous blood, we pointed out, is a powerful magical element. In Lev. 15:25-30 the extremely contagious character of the menstruating woman is clearly set forth in the simple language of taboo. References to the "uncleanness" of the woman, at the time of her period, run all through the Old Testament record. Various phases of taboo doubtless combine to render the woman highly taboo. The generative organs, when they function, always inspire the primitive man—and the man of advanced culture as well—with a kind of fear, if not dread. Hence the person is rendered taboo. The presence of "blood" alone would at once remove the woman from all contact with persons. The contagious character of this taboo we indicated by numerous references. Breech of continence at this period meant

death. This is the real atmosphere of taboo. The mother at childbirth—to whom the entire twelfth chapter of Leviticus is devoted—is strictly tabooed. Childbirth, being the culmination of the mystery of life, would very naturally be the subject of many varied and stringent taboos. This we showed to be the case. The same fundamental ideas attach to the issue of the man. We cited no fewer than twenty-eight references to the "uncleanness" of the man who has had an issue. Every person or object touched by such a person became taboo. We dwelt upon the highly contagious character of the spermatozoa. Such expressions, as we find in the frequent passages alluded to, are utterly unintelligible except as we construe them in the language of taboo. To this same family of taboos circumcision belongs. This institution we identified, originally, with sacrifice. Then we proceeded to show that the foreskin was sanctified by the blood which necessarily accompanied the sacrifice. Here again, as we observed, there is the magical association of the blood on the one hand and that of the reproductive organs on the other. Furthermore, we indicated that this rite served as a distinction between the "holy" and the "unclean." We referred to many Biblical passages in support of this view. Finally, we rested our argument upon the magical power ascribed to the blood—blood, highly magical, because of its being offered at the very source of paternity.

In Chapter III we devoted our time to the "blood" taboo. Repeatedly we have directed attention to the identification of the blood with life. In most of the sexual restrictions the blood was of primary importance. The relationship of blood to magic has frequently been pointed out. The sacrosanct character of blood we established by reference to over a score of Old Testament passages. Numerous other references might have been cited in all of which the extreme sanctity of blood is emphasized. Again and again we read in the early records the prohibition against eating the blood because it is the life (Gen. 9:4). We pointed out that even the blood of "clean" beasts is prohibited as food for the same reason. The meaning of all this is plain once we understand the language of taboo. Blood must not be

eaten; it must not even be touched; and in some instances blood must not even be looked upon. Contact with blood, we pointed out, resulted in pollution. We indicated similar blood taboos among other peoples, particularly in that wide-spread institution known as the blood covenant. Taboo was the plain conclusion to which the facts led us.

The subject of food taboos we discussed at considerable length. It was brought out that originally all slaughter for food had to be performed before the local altar. In other words, a certain taboo rested, in very early times, on all animals. Numerous food taboos among other peoples were brought forward and an underlying "identity of thought" established. We observed the many prohibitions on firstfruits. The crop was taboo until after the firstfruits had been offered to the Deity. The fruit of the young orchard must not be eaten for the first three years. The sacred character of the firstlings that "openeth the womb" was also clearly indicated. But our main argument found abundant support in the emphatic and numerous dietary laws of Lev. 11 and Deut. 14. The line between clean and unclean food is here drawn. A list of twenty unclean birds is named. Their flesh is taboo. Certain quadrupeds are proscribed as food. Likewise, fishes, not having "fins and scales," are forbidden food. The two chapters above referred to deal almost exclusively with these forbidden foods—"abominations." We observed that there was no rational basis for these restrictions. No one taboo can account for the food laws of the early Hebrews. That various phases of taboos account for these restrictions upon the diet of ancient Israel we have reasonably demonstrated.

In our study of the king, the priest and the Nazirite, we identified several taboos. The widespread taboos attaching to sacred persons we showed by frequent parallels among other peoples. Particular attention was called to the very ancient custom of anointing. This act imparted the character of holiness to the king or priest. The person of the "holy" man was inviolable. The king and Diety were one. No one might stretch forth his hand "against the Lord's anointed." The "holy" character of the king was further attested by the priestly functions

which he frequently exercised. The king's holiness was a physical one—as we have constantly observed—and is due to his anointing. He is, therefore, under a constant taboo. With reference to the priest, the taboo was even more perceptible. He stands "before Jehovah," therefore any "uncleanness" attaching to him would be disastrous. Even the priestly garments, we pointed out, became infected with holiness. A person touching the priestly garb became "hallowed." This, we observed, is taboo practice and belief pure and simple. Raiment of a certain texture and even of a prescribed color must be worn by the priest. Before entering the inner court the priest, it was shown, must observe scrupulously certain restrictions. We also noted the degrees of holiness in the arrangement of the tabernacle and in the assembly of the tribes. The Levites and priests stood between the people and the sanctuary, thus insulating them, as it were, against the supreme holiness. The priestly restrictions, which insure against uncleanness, we observed in Lev. 21 and 22. The priest, more than ordinary persons, is peculiarly susceptible to pollution. In Lev. 21 almost fifty restrictions are imposed upon the priest, thus revealing most clearly his taboo character. Some twenty rules, of like character, are laid down for the priest in Lev. 22. The "high priest" is subject to all the taboos imposed upon the priesthood in general and to certain other taboos of a more stringent nature. These, we observed, were in evidence on the great day of atonement when he alone might enter the "holy of holies." Any uncleanness on the part of the high priest would be fatal to the people. He is nearest the Deity. He is sacrosanct. Another sacred person, the Nazarite, dedicated himself to the performance of a holy vow. Until that vow had been performed he was under certain particular taboos. He was a "holy" person during the period of his vow. The Nazirite was a "separated" man—the very spirit of taboo, *i. e.*, "separation" (Num. 6:3). We referred to the law of the Nazirite in Num. 6, in which a score of typical taboos are imposed upon him. The unshorn hair is irrefutable testimony supporting the survival of a primitive taboo. We cited numerous parallels to the sanctity of hair among other peoples. The re-

strictions to which the Nazarite was subject are unmistakable taboos.

In our study of the firstborn we pointed out that, doubtless, a degree of holiness was imputed, in very early times, to all animals. This would at once render them more or less taboo. But we observed that the animal for the piacular sacrifice was always a firstling. This was true in very early times, as we have always indicated, of the firstborn male children. References quoted from the book of Exodus establish the "holy" character of the firstborn. Divine ownership of the firstling is explicitly set forth in this passage. With reference to the firstborn of man, we noted a redemption price; but the firstling of animals was irredeemable. It was wholly the Lord's. Such impressions are the very essence of taboo. The sanctity of the firstborn is congenital. The paschal lamb was a firstling. Here again we recognize an identity of thought with the offering of the firstfruits. The fundamental idea is the same. Again, we have established the sacrosanct character of a forbidden thing. The firstborn, because of its holy character, is taboo.

An argument for the presence of the taboo among the ancient Hebrews reached its final and most convincing stage in the herem ("the devoted thing"). Here, we pointed out, is the undisguised savage taboo carried to an extreme degree. The herem is the most fearful phase of taboo. It completely separates the "devoted thing" from human use. It is not only the exclusive property of the Diety, but it has been irrevocably dedicated to Him by its complete destruction. The "devoted thing" is irredeemable. The person or thing "devoted" is inviolable in the strictest sense. The highest degree of holiness attaches to the "ban." Contact with the "banned" object means death. From many references to the herem we selected over a score and, in each instance, revealed the taboo character of the "devoted" person or thing. We pointed out parallels to the "ban" among other cultures. In the herem we have the taboo carried to its severest extreme. It is all but called a taboo in the Old Testament record.

Finally, we showed, from a study of Lev. 4-6 how the

taboo was removed. We indicated the similarity of the means employed by other peoples. Certain purificatory rites must be observed before the "unclean"—tabooed—person may again enjoy social intercourse. Various forms of sacrifice, with a magical use of the blood, resulted in the removal of the guilt—taboo. In other words, the removal of "uncleanness" is the removal of the taboo. The prescriptions for purification are very numerous. The ritual of the red heifer (Num. 19) is a notable example of the removal of a taboo occasioned by contact with the dead. Thus we have established not only the taboo among the ancient Hebrews but also pointed out the means for its removal.

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